



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

PO BOX 202501
HELENA MT 59620-2501
www.metnet.state.mt.us
(406) 444-3680
888-231-9393

Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

September 21, 2001

TO: District Authorized Representatives, Title I Directors and Building Principals
of Title I Schools/Districts Identified for Improvement

FROM: Marsha Davis, Title I Improvement Specialist
B J Granbery, Title I Director

RE: FY 2002 Title I School Improvement -- Accountability Funds

The Office of Public Instruction is pleased to inform you of the availability of continuing funding for Title I schools identified for improvement. In November 1999, as part of the FY 2000 appropriation for Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Congress responded to President Clinton's call to strengthen accountability for results by targeting \$134 million to local educational agencies for the purpose of carrying out their school improvement and/or corrective action responsibilities under section 1116(c) of Title I. One hundred percent (100%) of these funds go to school districts to be used for developing and implementing school improvement plans, conducting professional development, strengthening curriculum and improving parental involvement. *A public school choice requirement is included which means that students must be provided with the option to transfer to another public school within the LEA that has not been identified for improvement.*

Last year, Montana received an allocation of \$456,525. A priority ranking of eligible schools was established to target allocations to the schools with the greatest needs. A per low-income child amount of \$150 was used to determine each school's potential allocation with a minimum allocation of \$10,000 for smaller schools. Twenty schools received an allocation. This year, Montana has received \$752,164. It is anticipated that the remaining schools that did not receive an allocation last year plus any newly identified schools this year will be eligible for an allocation based on the formula used previously.

In addition to school improvement responsibilities, this appropriations statute also reflects the recognition that students should have the opportunity, where possible, to attend a better performing public school (public school choice). In Montana, we expect this to be a non-issue since another school of the same grade structure often does not exist within the district; however, OPI will provide each eligible school with guidance on the public choice requirement and schools applying for funds will need to address the requirement in their application process. Complete guidance on this appropriation is enclosed.

Notification and Application Process

Enclosed in this mailing to authorized representatives is an allocation notice, an application form and specific guidance concerning the use of these funds. The prime applicant for the district is to complete the forms for all its eligible schools. Forms may also be downloaded by going to the OPI web site at <http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/MAIN.html> or you may request that the application be e-mailed to you (Word document).

Considerable flexibility has been granted to Title I schools identified for improvement in the development of their improvement plans thus far. Priority schools that have not submitted their plans will initially be granted a \$2,000 planning grant. They will then be required to work with an external technical assistance provider and will be given a specific format to follow for their plan development. Schools/districts with completed improvement plans will provide additional information specific to how the additional funds will be used to support their improvement efforts. Title I specialists will review and approve each application.

The following timeline is anticipated:

September 25, 2001	Notification to districts about availability of funding
October 30, 2001	Applications for funding due to OPI, Title I.
November 15, 2001	Applications approved, planning grants and/or full allocations approved. Approval letters and cash advance request forms mailed.
November 30, 2001	Notification to any newly identified schools and/or FY2000 participants of eligibility to apply in the event that remaining funds are available.
December 10, 2001	Payment of requested funds to districts

If you have any questions, please contact Marsha Davis at (406) 444-0793, msdavis@state.mt.us

Enclosures:

Allocation Notification
Application for FY2002 Title I School Improvement-Accountability Funds
Guidance on FY 2001 Appropriation for School Improvement